

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

April 10, 2010

The Honorable Joe Main
Assistant Secretary
Mine Safety and Health Administration
1100 Wilson Boulevard, 21st Floor
Arlington, VA 22209-3939

Dear Joe:

Today, West Virginia is mourning the loss of the 29 miners who died at the Upper Big Branch mine disaster. I know that you and all of MSHA's staff worked tirelessly this past week in hopes of rescuing trapped miners. We were all heartbroken to learn this morning that there were no survivors. We must, in their memory, thoroughly investigate this tragedy, demand accountability and act swiftly in order to prevent future mining fatalities.

Even as we continue to mourn, I know that all Americans join West Virginians in wanting answers to what caused the worst mining disaster in the last 40 years and this heartbreaking loss of life. Therefore, I am writing to request that additional resources at MSHA, separate from those dedicated to the important investigation into the cause of the Upper Big Branch disaster, be devoted to immediately reviewing the most recent data available on the quantity, frequency, and severity of mine safety citations. This review should include all citations issued to underground coal mines across the country -- including those that are being contested -- to evaluate whether safety trends at any of our nation's mines warrant additional and immediate safety precautions. It is my expectation that this review will be completed in the reasonably near future.

Miners have the right to trust that their working conditions are as safe as possible, so that at the end of their shifts they can return home to their families and loved ones. I look forward to working with you to make sure our nation's mines are safe working environments, so that future loss of life can be prevented. Our nation's miners and their families deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller IV

CC: The Honorable Hilda Solis, Secretary of Labor